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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Angola

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1433 (2002) of 15 August 2002, by which the Council established the United Nations Mission in Angola (UNMA). It updates the key developments in Angola since my interim report of 12 December 2002 (S/2002/1353) and provides recommendations on the future role of the United Nations in that country.

II. Political developments

2. It should be recalled that Security Council resolution 1433 (2002) mandated UNMA to assist the parties in the consolidation of peace. With the conclusion of the work of the Joint Commission, there emerged a consensus among the parties — the Government of Angola and União Nacional para a Indepêndencia Total de Angola (UNITA) — that the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol had been completed. Those actors, along with other political parties and members of civil society, have since been engaged in identifying the priorities to move the country from a state of armed conflict towards normalcy.

MPLA-UNITA dialogue

3. It should also be recalled that the political commissions of the ruling Movimento Popular da Libertação de Angola (MPLA) and UNITA held high-level talks in Luanda from 2 to 5 December to discuss issues of national interest, with particular emphasis on a review of the Constitution. In the course of those talks, the parties agreed on four main issues, namely that the President should remain head of State and Government, as well as party leader, the President would appoint provincial Governors, upon the recommendation of the majority party in each province, the legislature would be unicameral, and a National Council would be established in addition to the legislature, as a consultative body in which "traditional rulers" could participate. Those decisions were not supported universally, however. Some political parties argued that the bilateral agreements between MPLA and UNITA had circumvented the Parliament's Constitution Drafting Committee, in which other parties are represented.

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Government of Unity and National Reconciliation

4. On 5 December, President Jose Eduardo dos Santos appointed the Minister of Interior, Fernando da Piedade Dias dos Santos "Nando", as the new Prime Minister of a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation. New Cabinet ministers were subsequently appointed for the interior, finance, petroleum, and energy and water portfolios; the Ministers of Defence, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Planning and Public Administration were reappointed. In accordance with an understanding reached between the Government and UNITA, all former UNITA-Renovada Cabinet members were reappointed as representatives of the reunified UNITA.

5. Some opposition parties and members of civil society felt, however, that the new Cabinet did not represent sufficient change. Members of civil society also criticized the reappointment of some senior Government officials who, they alleged, had embezzled and misappropriated funds.

6. On 18 December, the Angolan National Assembly approved the proposed budget for 2003, for some US$ 6 billion, submitted by the newly established Government. While 99 members of Parliament voted for the bill, and none against, 44 members — all UNITA representatives — abstained, stating they had not been consulted on the budget prior to the vote.

Preparations for the elections

7. It should be recalled that the Government had indicated that the next general elections were envisaged to take place in 2004. However, some representatives from both MPLA and UNITA have recently stated that necessary conditions did not yet exist for free and fair elections to take place in the coming year. They proposed that postponing the elections by one or two years could create a more realistic time frame to achieve those national objectives, namely to revise the Constitution, elaborate a new electoral law, establish an independent electoral commission, register eligible voters and resettle or return internally displaced persons and ex-combatants. However, some representatives from both parties, as well as from other political parties, felt that legislative and presidential elections should be held as soon as possible. In his end of year speech, President dos Santos promised to work towards a broad national consensus on fixing the date for the next general elections.

8. Meanwhile, since the completion of the work of the Joint Commission, both the ruling MPLA and UNITA have been working on reorganizing and revitalizing their party structures at provincial and grass-roots levels in preparation for the forthcoming elections. The seventh ordinary session of the 250-member Central Committee of MPLA was held in Luanda on 13 December 2002, under the chairmanship of President dos Santos. Addressing his party, the President stressed the need to focus on economic recovery, including by reducing inflation by the end of 2003, to increase the party's chances of winning the elections.

9. UNITA continues to emphasize its political rehabilitation by highlighting to the public the role it had played in the successful completion of the Lusaka Protocol, pointing out that the international community recognized that role by lifting all sanctions against it. The party took a further step towards national reconciliation when, in early January, several of its representatives publicly apologized for the role of UNITA in the atrocities committed during the protracted conflict. The ninth UNITA party congress is expected to take place in March 2003.

10. Other opposition parties have also started preparing themselves for the next elections and are working to create a more united opposition.

III. Activities of the Mission and the United Nations in support of the consolidation of peace in Angola

11. During the reporting period, UNMA continued to implement its mandated tasks, which included, inter alia, support for the reintegration of ex-combatants, the facilitation and coordination of humanitarian assistance, the provision of technical support for mine action and the protection and promotion of human rights.

Demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants

12. The demobilization, resettlement and reintegration of UNITA ex-combatants has been one of the areas of continued and acute concern and is considered one of the Government's main priorities in order to ensure stability in the country. By the end of January, approximately 90,000 ex-combatants had undergone the registration process, while an estimated 15,000 were still waiting to move to their designated reception areas from the provinces and neighbouring countries. Owing to operational problems, however, the registration process was halted. While the movement of ex-combatants and dependants from reception areas has also decreased significantly with the start of the rainy season, it is expected to pick up again in April 2003.

13. A number of factors continue to hinder the demobilization, resettlement and reintegration process itself, including, in some instances, a politicized ex-combatant population which, at times, has been less than cooperative with the authorities. However, a lack of adequate facilities, inaccessible roads, mine infestation and inadequately prepared resettlement areas have added considerably to delays. A further difficulty is that payments by the Government to ex-combatants have been irregular and not universal. About 20 per cent of ex-combatants are still waiting to be included on the payroll. Resettlement kits are not being delivered to everyone and sensitization campaigns do not take place universally, resulting in instances where communities have expelled resettled ex-combatants, forcing some to return to the reception areas.

14. As a result of those problems and despite the Government's announced intention to close all reception areas by 31 December 2002, only four have actually been closed to date, with 34 reception areas in 16 provinces still open. It should also be noted that the closure of a reception area does not mean that its occupants have been fully resettled; in most cases, they are first placed in transit camps in other provinces. The Government therefore estimates that it may take up to one year to transfer the remaining ex-combatants and their dependants from their present locations to a total of over 600 areas designated for their resettlement.

15. During the period under review, UNMA continued to play a coordinating role, including by ensuring that information on ex-combatants gathered by the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) during the disarmament phase was shared with civilian institutions such as the Instituto de Reinserção Sòcio-Profissional dos Ex-Militares as well as the Ministry of Social Affairs and Reintegration, which assumed responsibility for the demobilization, resettlement and reintegration process on

2 October 2002. As a result of the frequent visits of its staff to the provinces, the Mission has established a central database on the status of demobilization, resettlement and reintegration and UNMA military liaison officers continue to inspect reception areas to collect and assess relevant information.

16. The Technical Group on demobilization, resettlement and reintegration, under the chairmanship of UNMA, continues to integrate and coordinate the activities of the United Nations system in Angola in its support of the demobilization, resettlement and reintegration process. The Group has been coordinating closely with the World Bank, which is preparing to fund a multi-donor resettlement programme for Angola to cover the demobilization of some 167,000 and the payment of reintegration benefits to approximately 108,000 ex-combatants.

17. In late December 2002, the Minister of Finance informed UNMA that the Government was facing financial difficulties in implementing demobilization, resettlement and reintegration. The transport of ex-combatants and their dependants required substantial resources that the Government may not yet be able to finance, and US$ 1.5 million was required to purchase demobilization kits. The Minister requested the support of the international community, in particular the United Nations, to extend assistance in that regard. That request was reiterated by the Minister of Social Affairs and Reintegration in late January 2003.

18. In the meantime, UNMA is still expecting a reply to its letter requesting that the United Nations be represented at the national level — as it is provincially — in the Commission on the Social and Productive Reintegration of Demobilized and Displaced People. Participation in that important Commission will enable UNMA to play a better coordinating role in the demobilization, resettlement and reintegration process.

Humanitarian situation

19. Although the humanitarian situation in the country has become more stable during the last six months, the need for emergency assistance remains pressing in many parts of Angola. Approximately 1.8 million people, including ex-combatants and their family members, currently require food assistance to survive, and between 2.1 and 2.4 million Angolans will be food insecure until the next harvest in April 2003. In mid-January, acute levels of malnutrition were reported in five provinces.

20. In the meantime, mortality rates remained at emergency levels, particularly in remote locations where people do not have regular access to basic health-care services, potable water and appropriate sanitation. Outbreaks of measles and meningitis were reported in at least four provinces, linked to population movements from previously inaccessible areas where vaccination programmes were either infrequent or non-existent.

21. The onset of the seasonal rains, combined with poor road conditions and mine incidents has severely affected humanitarian operations. By mid-January, approximately 445,000 people who had earlier been receiving assistance were inaccessible. Following a series of mine incidents in November and December, operations were shut down or reduced in 13 locations in seven heavily mined provinces. The situation of the populations in those areas was reportedly deteriorating and may become critical unless access can be re-established. In

addition, approximately 200,000 people living in remote locations have yet to be reached by humanitarian agencies.

22. At the same time, the end of hostilities has led to major population movements. During 2002, 1.3 million internally displaced persons returned to 500 communities in 17 provinces, and 85,000 refugees spontaneously returned from neighbouring countries. Basic conditions were in place in 30 per cent of the return sites. However, as many as 900,000 people returned to areas where basic services were not yet in place. In a major initiative to ensure that displaced populations are resettled in appropriate conditions, the Government of Angola issued regulations outlining the norms for the resettlement of displaced populations on 6 December 2002. The Norms and Regulations provide increased legal protection for returnees by specifying the pre-conditions and social targets that must be met during the resettlement and return process. It should be noted that on several occasions during the period when incidents of forced return occurred, the Government took immediate steps to ensure compliance with the Norms and Regulations.

23. According to the Government, more than 2.8 million people were still displaced at the end of 2002, approximately 290,000 of whom continued to live in camps and transit centres. In addition, as many as 400,000 refugees remained in neighbouring countries, that is, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Namibia, the Republic of the Congo and Zambia, as well as Botswana. The Government of Angola has signed repatriation agreements with some of those countries.

24. It is expected that some 1.2 million internally displaced persons, ex-combatants and refugees will return to their areas of origin during 2003, the majority during the first six months. Organized repatriation for approximately 150,000 Angolan refugees in Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo will begin in May 2003.

25. Humanitarian operations will target two key goals during 2003: stabilizing populations in danger and supporting return and resettlement on the basis of the Government's Norms and Regulations. United Nations agencies and partners will undertake initiatives aimed at reducing poverty and creating the conditions for sustainable development in an effort to move out of the emergency phase. In that regard, the United Nations aims to transfer the responsibility for the coordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance progressively to the Government.

Mine action

26. Much of the country remains heavily mined, the problem being most acute in Kuando Kubango, Benguela, Bié, Huambo, Malange, Huila and Moxico provinces, areas where population movements following returns and resettlement have resulted in increased incidents. Those mines pose a severe threat to resettlement and to the free movement of people and goods across the country.

27. The United Nations considers it a priority to integrate mine action effectively into emergency assistance, resettlement, socio-economic recovery and development activities, with a view to facilitating both humanitarian assistance operations and long-term development through strategic mine clearance and demarcation. Most of those activities are undertaken by international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). However, through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations is assisting the national body, the National Demining Institute

(INAD), in its reorganization and creation of national assets to tackle the mine problem. The United Nations also supports the Inter-Sectoral Commission on Demining and Humanitarian Assistance (CNIDAH), the national coordination authority. Comprehensive and integrated mine risk education is being conducted throughout the country under the coordination of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). During the reporting period, a technical adviser was deployed to Luanda to coordinate United Nations mine action activities, including capacity-building, training and resource mobilization efforts for mine action operations.

28. In addition to the information on mine locations collected by UNMA military liaison officers and the records contained in the National Mine Action Database at INAD, a Landmine Impact Survey will be carried out by international NGOs, including Survey Action Centre, which will manage the exercise. That survey, which is being coordinated with CNIDAH, is intended to provide a clear picture on the impact of mine infestation in the country and allow the Government and its partners to prioritize their work more effectively.

Human rights

29. Although war-related violations of human rights have virtually disappeared since the cessation of hostilities, other human rights abuses continue to occur. Violations against war-affected populations, including harassment, looting, extortion, intimidation, physical abuse, rape and arbitrary detention have continued, particularly in areas where State administration is weak or has been extended only recently and where mechanisms for redress remain inadequate. Many of those violations have affected internally displaced persons and have included forced resettlement and return as well as exclusion from social services and humanitarian assistance. A number of violations have also been reported in reception areas, where populations have only limited access to the formal judicial system. Of particular concern are incidents affecting women and children.

30. At the same time, there has been considerable improvement in the institutionalization of human rights at the level of both the Government and civil society, particularly in Luanda. However, much remains to be done to address the problems of police behaviour, in particular in some of the poorer neighbourhoods of the capital. Other areas of concern are the right to education, health and the participation of women in political and professional arenas.

31. UNMA efforts in the protection and promotion of human rights concentrated on the further strengthening of several key activities. In addition to the Human Rights office in Benguela and Kwanza Sul, the Mission established two offices in Malanje and Huambo Provinces and deployed Human Rights Officers for extended periods to previously inaccessible provinces. It assisted the Ministry of Justice in establishing Provincial Human Rights Committees, in order to provide a mechanism for the protection and promotion of human rights where previously no such system existed. UNMA human rights monitors also continued their work in community empowerment and participation, in partnership with local churches and NGOs, to establish protection mechanisms against human rights abuse and discrimination in the provinces and to carry out capacity-building projects.

32. In Luanda, UNMA also focused on sensitization and capacity-building, and on supporting legal and media aid projects related to national reconciliation. It also

helped national authorities to expand the municipal courts and create a "case tracking" programme in the Prosecutor General's office.

33. The importance of UNMA human rights activities in the consolidation of peace in Angola has been widely acknowledged, including by the Government, the civil society and major international stakeholders. It is obvious that those vital activities, including capacity-building, will have to be sustained for a longer period in order for them to be truly effective.

34. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights visited Angola from 15 to 18 January. In his meetings with the Angolan authorities, the High Commissioner stressed the importance of having a National Human Rights Action Plan to ensure that the human rights aspects of the Angolan Constitution and domestic legislation were being implemented. To that end, the establishment of a National Human Rights Commission, which my Special Representative had earlier suggested to the Government, may be useful.

Child protection

35. The benefits of peace have not significantly affected Angola's children, who continue to suffer from adverse humanitarian conditions, inadequate resources in resettlement areas, HIV/AIDS, physical violence and exploitation, sexual and psychological abuse, the lack of education and basic health care and a virtually non-existent juvenile justice system. There are no long-term guarantees to prevent the re-recruitment of former under-age combatants and the issue of girls who were abducted during the conflict still must be resolved. Many children are also the victims of landmines but receive virtually no rehabilitation assistance.

36. With the support of UNICEF and other national and international partners, the Government has started to implement a strategy for the protection of child rights in the reception areas and transit camps, comprising both emergency assistance and projects to reintegrate and rehabilitate children and youth. The Government is also preparing a national campaign against measles and initiating a "back to school" programme. For the first time, the Government expects to submit a report to the May 2003 session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

37. During the reporting period, UNMA continued to raise awareness of children's rights and supported and complemented the child protection work of the Government, UNICEF, NGOs and other actors.

Development activities

38. The economic situation improved slightly, with the inflation rate dropping from an estimated 110 per cent to 106 per cent, and the fiscal deficit at 8.5 per cent during 2002. The availability of locally produced agricultural products has increased in urban areas, as has the movement of people and goods throughout the country. However, with a virtually non-existent infrastructure in the provinces and an overall economy devastated by, among other factors, more than three decades of war, Angola's recovery, reconstruction and long-term development needs remain formidable. The United Nations is expected to assist with major gap-bridging initiatives in order to enable the transition of the country from relief dependency to development and self-reliance.

39. To that end, UNDP, the World Bank and other bilateral and multilateral partners have been collaborating on working out a comprehensive development policy framework; while UNDP recently launched the second phase of its Programme for Institutional Reform and Administrative Modernization, which aims at enhancing the capacity of both the central and local governments. UNDP has also conducted a review of public administration functions with the aim of advising the Government on the functions it should transfer to the public sector. Furthermore, the United Kingdom Department for International Development recently joined UNDP and the World Bank technical assistance teams in preparing an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan.

40. During my meeting with the G-8 States in Kananaskis, Canada, from 27 to 28 June 2002, I identified Angola as one of three countries in Africa most in need of post-conflict and peace-building assistance. The international donors' conference for Angola, which is scheduled for the first part of 2003, should provide an opportunity for the international community to channel its assistance to the country. However, the Angolan Government is aware that it needs to exert more effort in order to allay donors' concerns and to reach understanding with the Bretton Woods institutions. In preparation for that conference, an option under consideration is to convene a meeting with the donors beforehand, which would allow the Government to brief them on its efforts to promote transparency and accountability and on its own financial contributions to the emergency and transitional phases. The United Nations will continue to participate in assisting in the preparation of that conference, as appropriate.

IV. Observations

41. The last year has seen a dramatic change in the situation in Angola. In January 2002 Angola was still a country in deadly conflict — one of the longest-running in Africa — with a history of unsuccessful, though unremitting attempts at achieving a lasting and durable peace. With the conclusion of the work of the Joint Commission at the end of 2002 Angola has firmly placed itself on the path of political, social and economic recovery. For the first time since independence, Angolans can live without fear of a recurrent and devastating war. As the country moves to fulfil its aspirations of nation-building, it is my sincere hope that the Government will consolidate peace and national reconciliation in all parts of its national territory.

42. Since the establishment of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission I (UNAVEM I) in 1988, the United Nations, with the support of the international community, has played a critical role in the peace process through a series of peacekeeping operations, accompanied by peace-building efforts and humanitarian assistance. The sanctions imposed on UNITA, which the Security Council lifted in December 2002, also helped to bring about the desired change, not only because they supplemented national and international efforts to end the war, but also because the United Nations put in place a robust implementation and follow-up monitoring mechanism to ensure their effectiveness.

43. However, even when peace seemed unattainable, the United Nations and the international community continued to believe in the desire for unity among the Angolan people. Massive United Nations resources were invested and I would like to use this opportunity to pay tribute once again to those who lost their lives in the

service of peace in Angola, including my Special Representative, Alioune Blondin Beye, who died in a tragic plane crash in 1998.

44. UNMA has completed its mandated political tasks, as set out in resolution 1433 (2002) of 15 August 2002. The United Nations agencies and programmes have provided essential humanitarian and development assistance throughout the period covered by the mandate of the Mission and will continue to work closely with the Government to implement a post-conflict strategy. However, the residual tasks foreseen under resolution 1433 (2002), including in the areas of human rights, mine action, reintegration and resettlement of ex-combatants, humanitarian assistance, economic recovery and electoral assistance, require continued attention and support.

45. More than 1 million people who have returned to their areas of origin will require aid through at least two harvests before they can hope to become self-sufficient. Adequate funding for humanitarian assistance is essential to ensure that a stable platform for sustainable development is built and I encourage Member States to support generously the 2003 Consolidated Appeal, which calls for US$ 384 million to implement 166 projects.

46. The establishment of a reliable and self-sustaining national mine-action capacity still depends on technical and financial assistance from the international community. The national reconciliation effort will also require continued support, particularly for the reintegration and resettlement of ex-combatants and the preparations for elections. Reaching a general national consensus on a date for the forthcoming general elections will be an important step towards moving that process forward. In addition, human rights capacity-building requires sustained support and a sound child protection strategy needs to be developed.

47. In the light of the above, I requested my Special Representative to consult with the Government of Angola and other national and international stakeholders to determine how the United Nations could continue to assist the Angolan Government and people in the consolidation of peace in the country. Those discussions, including with President dos Santos, took place in Luanda from 18 January to 1 February 2003. As a result, I propose that the United Nations Resident Coordinator resume the responsibility for United Nations activities in the country upon the conclusion of the UNMA mandate on 15 February 2003, including assisting the Government's efforts to implement the residual tasks under resolution 1433 (2002). The Office of the Resident Coordinator will be strengthened for this transitional period by adding a unit under his supervision to address the residual tasks, for which additional resources may be required.

48. In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my Special Representative, Ibrahim Gambari, for his efforts to bring to a conclusion this important phase of United Nations involvement in Angola. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the United Nations staff who have served, and continue to serve, the cause of peace and development in Angola for their tireless efforts and exemplary dedication.